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STATE FOR AF/E AND DRL/ILCSR
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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI: CHILD LABOR INFORMATION FOR TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
ACT REPORT

REF: STATE 127448

11. SUMMARY: Child labor in Djibouti is largely limited to informal sector activities, including street vending, work in family-owned businesses, and begging. In rural areas, children are often involved in caring for their families' livestock. Agriculture in Djibouti is largely limited to nomadic pastoralism, and there is no significant manufacturing sector. A small number of children, especially street children, are involved in prostitution. By promulgating a new comprehensive anti-trafficking law and working to raise public awareness on this issue, the GODJ is making significant efforts to combat child prostitution. END SUMMARY.

A: LAWS AND REGULATIONS PROSCRIBING
THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

12. The minimum age for employment and apprenticeships in Djibouti is 16 years. Young persons 16 to 18 years may not be employed as domestic servants or in hotels and bars. Young persons must receive the same payment as adults for similar work. The Labor Inspector can require a medical exam to verify if the work is beyond the capabilities of the young person. Penalties for non-compliance with the provisions regarding equal pay and medical exams are punishable by fines. Night work is explicitly forbidden for individuals younger than 18 years, with penalties for non-compliance that include fines and, on the second infraction, 15 days of imprisonment.

13. The law prohibits forced and bonded labor. The law also prohibits the procurement of prostitution, with punishments including a fine and up to 10 years of imprisonment when a minor is involved. Increased penalties also apply if coercion is used or in cases involving the trafficking of persons outside or into the country. The law also provides for penalties against the use of children in pornography and in the trafficking of drugs. In December 2007, the President of Djibouti signed a new comprehensive anti-trafficking law. Law 210 "Regarding the Fight Against Human Trafficking" covers both internal and transnational trafficking and prohibits all forms of trafficking in persons. It protects victims regardless of ethnicity, gender, or nationality, and prescribes penalties of up to 30 years' imprisonment for traffickers.

14. Djibouti does not have compulsory military service. The GODJ stated in a 1998 report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that "as is the case for all civilian and military jobs, young people under 18 may not be accepted into the army." The Government has a voluntary national services program for persons ages 17 to 25 that includes military training, but there were no reports of any people under 18 in the armed forces.

B: IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

15. The authority to enforce child labor laws and regulations rests with the Police Vice Squad (Brigade des Moeurs) and the local police department (Gendarmerie). The Brigade des Moeurs has reportedly closed bars where child prostitution may be occurring. The Labor Inspectorate has the authority to sanction businesses that employ children. As of 2008, the Labor Inspectorate had three inspectors and six controllers. Child labor inspections are normally conducted during the course of regular preventative inspections, or if a problem is reported. However, in practice the Labor Inspectorate did not have sufficient resources to conduct regular preventive inspections, or to follow up on the enforcement of previous cases, and no child labor inspections occurred during the year.

C, D, E: PREVENTION, POLICY, AND PROGRESS

16. In urban areas of Djibouti, children work in a variety of informal sector activities. Children perform jobs such as shining shoes, guarding and washing cars, cleaning storefronts, sorting merchandise, selling various items, and changing money. Children work day and night in family-owned businesses such as restaurants and small shops. Some children work as domestic servants and others are involved in begging. Children are also involved in the sale of the legal narcotic khat. Many working children are displaced from neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia, and some live on the streets. In rural areas, children work in agriculture and with livestock.

17. Large numbers of voluntary economic migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia pass illegally through Djibouti en route to the Middle East;

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among this group, a small number of women and girls fall victim to domestic servitude or commercial sexual exploitation after reaching Djibouti City or the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor. A small number of girls from impoverished Djiboutian families may also be exploited in prostitution as a means of income, in some instances under the auspices of traffickers. There were credible reports of child prostitution on the streets and in brothels despite increased government efforts to stop it, including keeping children at risk off the streets and warning businesses against permitting children to enter bars and clubs.

18. Increasing school attendance has remained a top priority for the GODJ. The GODJ currently devotes nearly a third of its national budget to education, with a particular focus on primary education, and has asked international donors to channel assistance to the education sector. Gross enrollment rates increased from 49 percent in 2003 to 67 percent in 2007. Girls' enrollment rates have especially increased: whereas in 2003 there were only 75 girls enrolled in school for every 100 boys, in 2007 the ratio was 98 girls enrolled for every 100 boys.

19. In March 2007, the Government of Djibouti's Ministry of Communication initiated its first anti-trafficking public awareness campaign, specifically citing child prostitution. This campaign also included coverage of a Government debate in October 2007 regarding the recently enacted anti-trafficking law. Moreover, the President of Djibouti and his wife hosted a public education event that highlighted putting an end to child trafficking.

SWAN